

have arrived at a consensus challenging the governing majority to join us in an earmark moratorium than they are interested in the response of the majority who hold the reins of power.

I mean, headlines attest to a vigorous debate among the minority and dead silence among the majority.

And I must tell you, it has to be frustrating, Mr. Speaker, to millions of Americans who long for a Congress that will put integrity and the restoration of public confidence in the Federal budget above partisan differences.

So I say to my colleagues on the other side, what is your response to our challenge for an immediate moratorium on all earmark spending? What will Speaker PELOSI and House Democrats decide at their conference retreat this week?

My hope is as our challenge sits now on the table and is met with stark silence from the Democrats, that as your party meets, Mr. Speaker, as you consider how we can restore public confidence, that Democrats will join Republicans in an immediate earmark moratorium so we can put our fiscal house in order and restore public confidence.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until noon today.

Accordingly (at 10 o'clock and 48 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess until noon.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. PASTOR) at noon.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Daniel P. Coughlin, offered the following prayer:

All-powerful and ever-living God, direct Your love and highest inspirations within us.

Congress stands today between days of retreat for both Republican and Democrat Members of the House. May these days of reflection and planning be blessed with clarity of vision and unified resolve.

Filled with gratitude for the people and the many gifts bestowed upon this Nation, help them to be attuned not only to the problems and questions of Your people, but empower them to build upon their strengths and their hopes for the future.

You alone can lift Your servants above self-interest and fractured alliances to create a renewed solidarity that will bring this Nation to unity and peace.

Only by discerning such gifts within ourselves, Lord, can we bring the seed

of promise to others. For we place our trust not in money nor in munitions, but in the meaning You bring to Your people, now and forever.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from Texas (Mr. CUELLAR) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. CUELLAR led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

SUPPORT ECONOMIC STIMULUS PACKAGE

(Mr. CUELLAR asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. CUELLAR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to support the bipartisan economic stimulus plan that will help strengthen our Nation's economy and help millions of American taxpayers and their families.

In my congressional district, the median household income is \$36,000, and those families face rising prices in utilities, food, and health insurance, which stretch their monthly budgets to nearly the breaking point.

Also, nearly 39 percent of these households are headed by single mothers living below the poverty level, who struggle to feed and clothe their children with limited budgets, as they are the sole earners.

The stimulus package will provide at least \$900 to single mothers and their families, which helps alleviate their burden.

Mr. Speaker, I am glad to support the bipartisan economic stimulus plan, and I ask my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to join us today in supporting this legislation.

THE CHINESE CROCODILE

(Mr. POE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, the Chinese attack on the Christian faith continues. For 60 days, the Chinese Government has held Shi Weiham, a Christian bookstore owner, in secret detention for praying.

As China readies for the 2008 Summer Olympics, it is trying to convince crit-

ics that it embraces religious freedom. But China is secretly moving religious believers to the dark, damp, hidden hideaway of jail.

China restricts all religious practice to state-sanctioned churches and certain places of worship. So Chinese don't dare pray or worship anywhere else, or off to jail they go. That is what happened to Shi Weiham.

China's religious tolerance is a public relations campaign draped in hypocrisy. China arrests thousands of Christians, Muslims, and Buddhists each year.

As religion is being attacked across atheistic Communist China, we should recall Winston Churchill's words about communism: "A communist is like a crocodile, when it opens its mouth, you cannot tell whether it is trying to smile or preparing to eat you up." The Chinese crocodile is devouring religious freedom among its people.

And that's just the way it is.

PERMANENT FIX FOR FISA

(Mr. WILSON of South Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to call on the Democrat majority to pass a permanent fix to our Nation's foreign surveillance law and give our intelligence community the tools they need to protect American families.

It has been 6 months since this body passed a temporary patch to the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act. If Congress fails to pass a permanent fix, our Nation's intelligence community will once again be limited in their ability to track terrorists and defeat their efforts to murder Americans.

In his State of the Union address last night, President Bush reiterated to Members of both parties that the time to act is now. On this most important of issues, we owe it to the American people not to put American families at risk.

We can all agree that the safety and well-being of our Nation's families is our utmost priority, so let's work together on an agreement that will ensure that we meet the challenge of defending our Nation for the long term. Our enemies will not hesitate to exploit our intelligence loopholes. It is imperative that we not give them that opportunity.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, and we will never forget September 11th.

DEMOCRATS REFORM EARMARK PROCESS

(Mr. ARCURI asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. ARCURI. Mr. Speaker, 7 years into his Presidency, President Bush is finally urging reform of the earmark process. He is a little late.